(c) *Nyareth* - The son of a *Nyireth*. 565
(d) *Kwanyireth* - The grandson of a *Nyireth*. 614

In some regions the members of the royal clan have become more numerous than commoners and have supplanted them in the chieftainship of the settlements. This has been possible because the members of the royal clan are richer and tend to marry more wives, and also because of the system whereby the offspring of a *reth* are planted out in various settlements away from Fashoda. When one of the *reth*'s wives is about to give birth to a child she leaves Fashoda and goes to her own village. As soon as the *nyireth* is weaned he is placed in charge of some trustworthy settlement chief, often the mother's brother, and is brought up among his mother's people. When the child grows up and marries he builds a separate hamlet called *pa nyireth* (unless he is called on to become *reth*), and thus becomes the founder of a local lineage branch of the royal clan which may eventually grow powerful enough to overthrow the dominant lineage and assume the political aspects of its position in the settlement. 644 644 614 591 565

Daughters of a *reth* are not allowed to marry and therefore cannot start lineages which would count as sister's sons to the royal house. 644 582

The Ororo

This clan is separate from the royal clan and consists of the descendants of a disinherited branch. They are few in number and may intermarry with the royal clan. It is said that the *reth* still has the right to disinherit lineages of the royal clan but, apart from one traditional instance, it is not certain whether the right has been exercised. The *ororo* are indistinguishable from the commoner clans except for the special functions they perform for the *reth* at his investiture and at the time of his funeral. Traditionally, the *ororo* always smother the *reth* when he is ritually killed. The *reth* always takes some of his wives from the *ororo*. 565 614 643

The Bang Reth

The *bang reth* are the personal attendants of the *reth*. Originally they were captives from other tribes but later, volunteers from the commoner clans in Shillukland, if they were poverty stricken, might leave their own clans and become the *reth*'s retainers. In return for receiving cattle to marry with, they tended animals, engaged in building and cultivation and performed all the duties connected with the upkeep of the royal household. Apart from these and their descendants, the *bang reth* also included all those who were enslaved because their brothers were homicides and those who became possessed by the spirit of Nyikang. 565 644 727 735 567 672

The *bang reth* are a fictitious clan; they cannot intermarry even though there is often no blood relationship among them. The *reth* never marries into the *bang reth* clan and, as an indication of the impossibility of this, he calls the daughter of a retainer *kwara*, 'my grand-daughter'. 565 614 608 644

The *bang reth* live in a hamlet of their own near the capital in which the *reth* resides. When he dies they, together with his elderly widows, go and live near his shrine and look after it. When a *nyireth* is planted out, his father sends some of his retainers to live with him; these become *bang* 565 644 614

9:Howell E-5 (1937-1950) 1952 FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

year round and only the youths go to the cattle camps in the riverain pastures, which are never more than a few miles from their villages. The Shilluk are not a pastoral people in the sense that the Nuer and Dinka are, and rely to a much greater extent on agricultural products and on fish, for they are skilled and experienced fishermen. Since their migration to their present territory, it is probable that they have never had a very large cattle population, for their riverain pasture is not extensive.[1]

Shilluk clans[2] are not territorial in basis for they are highly segmented and widely distributed throughout the settlements of Shilluk country; as corporate units they have no real significance except at times of national festivals, and then only in the sphere of ritual and ceremony.

The Shilluk are divided into four main classes or groups of clans:

(i) The *kwareth*: the royal house, who trace descent from Nyikang and from whom the *reth* of the Shilluk is chosen.

(ii) The *ororo*: a disinherited branch of the royal house who do not differ from commoners except in the special functions they perform at the installation of the *reth*, during his lifetime, and at his death. They are a distinct exogamous clan, though they may intermarry with the *kwareth* despite common ancestry.

(iii) The *collo*: the name refers collectively to the main body of the Shilluk clans of which a large number trace descent patrilineally from (*a*) the original followers of Nyikang, (*b*) individuals of other tribes who have migrated and settled in Shilluk country from early times onwards, and (*c*) ancestors who are lost in antiquity, but who may have occupied Shilluk country before the arrival of Nyikang.

(iv) The *bang reth*: the personal attendants of the *reth*, his wives or wives of past *reths*; the descendants of royal slaves obtained by capture; those who volunteer to serve him by reason of their possession by the spirit of Nyikang,[3] and paupers who volunteer for this form of service in order to exist at all. Finally, there are the alleged descendants of those who were enslaved because their close kinsmen committed homicide, though this statement must be examined more critically later.

There are no real caste distinctions between *kwareth*, *ororo*, *collo*, and *bang reth* and, apart from restrictions on the marriages of daughters of a living or past *reth*, they intermarry freely. The *kwareth*, however, by reason of their connexion with Nyikang and subsequent *reths*, are treated with special respect and this extends to those *bang reth* who have close association with the shrines of Nyikang or of dead kings. The Shilluk basic social structure is very similar to that of the Nuer and Dinka, though there are important differences. The segmentation of the population into territorial units and of the clans into localized lineages has, however, a greater permanency and stability. The distinctive feature of the Shilluk political structure is the existence of an established and theoretically omnipotent monarchy and it is in the political sphere

[1] An accurate census taken during the veterinary campaign against trypanosomiasis gives a figure of 23,000. This was after a very severe epidemic in 1946 and it may be assumed that they had lost at least 30 per cent. of their stock. A human census, accurate at any rate within 15 per cent., gives a population figure of 110,000. The ratio of human population to cattle population is therefore between 110·5 and 110·25. Cf. Nuer where highest ratio given is 112·3 and the lowest 111·2.

[2] *kwo*: Literally 'descendants of', prefixing the name of the clan. '*kwo* Okelo'—the descendants of Okelo—and so on.

[3] Often now attendants at the many shrines of Nyikang.

The natives weave their hair into fantastic shapes. If a person has very fine hair, he puts a few thorns in it to keep off the evil eye. Should the evil eye fall on his hair, his head would break out in sores. 751 754 [302]

When a person has his body well oiled or covered with some fine ashes, he is very likely to have the evil eye cast on him. To escape that misfortune he takes a cucumber like pod from a wild plant, and takes out the seeds. Some of the seeds are put on the temples, and some on the neck, and others on the tip of the shoulder blade, or the entire fruit may be worn suspended from the neck.

When butter is boiled to clarify it, the work is usually done at night so that the evil eye may not be cast on it.

The Shilluks will not say that they are in good circumstances, lest it be heard by some envious person, and he should cast the evil eye on their possessions. When a rich man is asked in regard to his property, he usually says I have one or two cows, but they are very poor cows. [556]

The parents of a very fine looking child do not like to let people see it for fear someone will cast the evil eye on it, and the parent is very angry when someone comments on the good appearance of the child. Should the child be taken sick, the parents call on the person who made the remark, and demand that he pay the fine required when a person is killed. The accused usually holds out, and a compromise is affected. He brings a sheep, and one of its ears is cut off. The sheep then is a witness against the man, and by doing that, he assumes the responsibility for the child. If it dies, he pays the fine as though he had killed it. Even if the child reaches maturity and dies, the man is responsible and must pay the fine. 672 751 754

Frequently people have hard knots in their flesh. These are really stones that have been put there by someone with the evil eye. The swellings do not disappear. 754 826

The Shilluks have a custom that when a person is threshing his grain, they go to beg from him. Sometimes they go in such numbers that the man has very little left for himself, but he does not dare to refuse for fear someone in the party may cast the evil eye on him. He gets even by going to beg from some other person. 626 754 431 735●

They give a few warnings as to conduct when with a person who has the evil eye. 751 754 626

15: Oyler M-5 (ca. 1918) 1926 FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

the animal carefully, and he made his escape, and ran away. It was too much trouble for them to catch the animal, and so they went back to the old chief and demanded that he give them another animal in exchange for the one that had escaped. The new animal was given to them, and they departed. 425 431

Once some women went to dance before a chief, who was away from home. One of his followers, anxious to save the property of his master, took a whip made of hippopotamus hide, and used it freely on the women. They retreated to a considerable distance, and sat down to discuss the matter. At that time the chief returned, and he was distressed when he heard what his follower had done. He made peace with the women, and gave them the ox. [622]

Visitors from other villages are not supposed to go on these trips, nor are they allowed to eat of the meat when the animal is killed. When a woman is married and goes to the village of her husband, she is not allowed to go on these begging trips until after she has lived there a full year. The women might consent, but her husband would be angry, as it might lead to her being led astray. She does not have the right to return to her old home and go with her old friends on their begging expeditions. Women in the advanced stages of pregnancy are not permitted to go on these trips. 425 484 593 [843]

These dances are a great diversion for the women. They are looked upon as memorable occasions. The chief visited may not be in a financial position to afford to give the ox, and yet he gets full value for the animal in the prestige it gives him. 425 556 535

The women have another begging custom that is suggestive of Ruth. When a man threshes his grain he calls in the young men, who beat it out with flails. The women of the man's family winnow the grain. Often the man does not have enough women-folk to do all the work, and other women are called in to help. The helpers get all the grain that is left in the chaff as their portion. 476 462 241

Many women come to beg from the owner of the threshing floor. They do not speak to the owner of the floor, but they make a general statement that they have come to beg. They sit in silence, and watch the progress of the work. They do not ask for grain, but each woman keeps her gourd in a prominent position. When the threshing is finished, the owner of the field fills a basket with grain, and from that basket he 735 241

15: Oyler M-5 (ca. 1918) 1926 FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

735 241 fills the gourds belonging to the women. If the basket is not sufficient to fill all the gourds, and if the man is of a good disposition, he brings out enough more grain to fill them all. If the man is churlish he will say, "I have given you enough" and will refuse to give them any more than the one basket full. Sometimes a man will say, "Why do you make sport of me by coming here to beg? See, my grain is very little indeed." That is the line the man takes when he refuses altogether to give grain to the women.

788 735 241 If the women are pleased with the amount of grain that has been given them, they will bless the owner of the threshing floor. Each woman takes a few grains of the grain that has been given her, and sprinkles it on the threshing floor. As she sprinkles the grain she says, "I return you yours, I eat, and am satisfied." After such a blessing his crop the next year should be very abundant. Often the recipient will say, "I am a woman belonging to God. I am happy, because you have given to me, now I bless you."

425 556 It is an honour to have the women come to a man's floor to beg, as it implies that he is a rich man, and can supply them. However, it is often a hardship, and many of them can ill afford the grain they give away to the women. One man said that one year all the grain he raised was given to the women who begged from him, and the only way he got food for his family was by his wife's going out to other threshing floors, and begging from the owners of the floors. It is not unusual for a woman to go to a village at some distance and beg from all the men in the village. She may return with ten or more baskets of grain. Sometimes she is refused the grain that she seeks. The man who refuses to give from his [626] threshing floor is considered a very mean man, and to make a good showing, they give more than they can afford.

Men sometimes go to the threshing floors to beg, but in that case the procedure is different. The man who begs gets a basket and, unbidden, helps carry the grain to the village. At the end of the threshing the owner is supposed to give him a basket of grain, but often he is given less than that. Both sides profit. The beggars have a picnic, and the man from whom they beg is highly honoured.

17: Pumphrey G-5 (1934-1938) 1941
FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

565 614 644 [643] the rules of exogamy the *Ororo* are considered as a *Collo* clan and can intermarry with the *Kwar Reth* as well as with any *Collo* clan other than their own. The *Reth* always has some *Ororo* women among his wives and it is traditionally they who smother him when his powers of procreation are failing.

THE COLLO.

565 The *Collo* comprise the aggregate of subject clans whose various origins are for the most part obscure. A few trace their descent from those who accompanied Nyikang from the neighbourhood of Wau.[22] Others, also few in number, purport to be descendant from Nyikang's collateral relatives.[23] Many claim a mythical origin. Others[24] are avowedly accretions, others[25] again being descendants of the prior inhabitants of the country.

BANG RETH.

565 644 It has already been described how the *Reths* used to keep order in the tribe and how they enriched themselves in the process. With this wealth of cattle they maintained what was an important part of their pomp and executive, namely a large body of retainers knowns as *Bang Reth*. These were recruited in various ways. Originally the [727] main source was captive enemies. In later and more peaceful times [735] they were recruited by voluntary enlistment of those who found themselves in poor circumstances and unable to raise the necessary [614] cattle to marry. Such persons, from the moment they became *Bang Reth*, severed all connexion with their own clan and became the *Reth's* men, pledged to assist him in various ways such as building, tending animals and odd executive duties and receiving in return cattle [682] with which to marry. One method of recruiting *Bang Reth*, which is of great interest in that it shows that there was an idea of certain wrongs

22. *e.g.*, *Kwar* Abogo, *Kwar* Mual, *Kwar* Nyilang and *Kwar* Ojul.
23. *e.g.*, *Kwar* Jur, *Kwar* Othou and *Kwar* Okel.
24. *e.g.*, *Kwar* Jung (who were originally Dinka).
25. *e.g.*, *Kwar* Oman (of Ogod).